

June 2018

SAINT INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

JUNE NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR



Are you growing?

How is your spiritual life? Are you growing?

For some, spiritual growth is something never considered. As Christians, spiritual growth is something we should be concerned about. The ideal Christian is one who is continually growing from “grace to grace.” There are no limits to our potential in Christ because God is limitless. It is generally taught that if we are not growing in and towards God than we are losing ground in our faith. There really isn’t a neutral position for Christians to live in. In Revelation 3:6, Jesus vomits the lukewarm out of his mouth. Apparently, people who are non-committal in their desire to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven make our Lord sick.

We are called to grow from grace to grace. On the other hand, for some, the challenge of growth in Christ is a

tormenting drive that pushes them into self-judgment and self-hatred. The questions above get rephrased into accusations. “My spiritual life is average, I am not growing fast enough, what is wrong with me?” Driving feelings of inadequacy can push many to simply drop out of the faith. After all, why try when you will never be good enough? Such a state could be described as spiritual neurosis. Psychological neurosis (a word generally not use anymore) is “characterized by anxiety, depression, or other feelings of unhappiness or distress that are out of proportion to the circumstances of a person's life.” A spiritually neurotic person lives in a state of chronic spiritual distress. In the Orthodox tradition, it is not healthy to be in chronic spiritual distress. The modern Greek Saint Porphyrios of Kafsokalivia was familiar with this condition and states:

For many people, however, religion is struggle, a source of agony and anxiety. That's why many of the 'religious minded' are regarded as unfortunates because others can see the desperate state they are in. And so it is. Because for the person who doesn't understand the deeper meaning of religion and doesn't experience it, religion ends up as an illness, and indeed a terrible illness. So terrible that the person becomes weak-willed and spineless... They make prostrations and cross themselves in Church and they say, 'we are unworthy sinners', then as soon as they come out they start to blaspheme everything holy whenever someone upsets them a little.

How should a Christian approach questions about spiritual growth? "The way is narrow," there is always a tightrope to walk between the possible extremes of being in a neurotic pressure cooker or giving up. In order to walk the tightrope of assessing ourselves, it might help to put things in perspective. It might help us to know that we are finite and cannot objectively tell how our spiritual life is going. We are often blind to ourselves. When we are able to see, we are often biased, either for or against ourselves. To complicate things further we compare ourselves to others, typically out of context. These are the pitfalls of being a self-aware Christian.

The first step on to tightrope of assessing ourselves is having an attitude of humility. Apart from the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we cannot truly know ourselves. With humility, we can be watchful over ourselves and see our general attitudes and actions. We act out our beliefs, so paying attention to how we act in various circumstances can be illuminating. Over time by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we can develop the skill of being healthily self-aware. We can bring our thoughts about ourselves to confession or to close friends to get constructive feedback about our perceptions. If you do watch yourself, eventually you will see things you do not like. Humility does not judge or condemn. If you are guided by grace, humility will lead you to ask God for forgiveness and find strategies for growth. In your prayers ask God to give you the gift of humility.



See how such simple questions can be complicated. May God bless us to be concerned about our spiritual growth. May He bless us with the gift of humility so that we can avoid the pitfall of spiritual neurosis. Finally, may God bless us with the gift of spiritual thirst so that individually and as a community, we can strive to reach our potential in Christ.



"Every human being is confronted with these two possibilities, ultimately the only two possibilities of human existence. Either a person chooses life by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit—the "abundant" and "eternal life" given by God in creation and salvation through Jesus Christ—or the person chooses death. The whole pathos of human existence consists in this choice, whether a person is aware of it or not. Christian spiritual life depends on the conscious choice of the "way of life." To "choose life" and to walk in the "way of life" is the way that man shows himself to be in the image and likeness of God.

Fr. Thomas Hopko

"The faster you acquire a virtue, the easier it is lost. The more slowly and laboriously you acquire it, the more steadfastly it remains; just like that squash plant that grew tall and said to the cypress tree, "See how much I've grown in just a few days! You've been here for so many years and haven't grown much at all!" "Yes," said the cypress tree, "but you still haven't seen storms, heat waves, and cold spells!" And after a little while, the squash plant dried up, while the cypress tree remained where it was.
Elder Ephraim of the Holy Mountain (Athos)

NEWS & UPDATES

- The parish council has decided to switch our light system in the church to LEDs. This should help with our electric bill as well as fix the hot dimmer switches that are below the HVAC thermometer.
- Our irrigation was installed and we expect that the sod and grass surrounding the parish hall will be completed this month.
- The land for our cemetery has been cleared and will be sodded and seeded this month.
- Our church has a new camcorder and audio system for recording classes and sermons. If you miss a class or sermon check out our YouTube page.
- See Calendar below for the schedule of services and happenings at St. Innocent Church. You can also find this calendar by signing into Realm, on our Google calendar, and our website.

EVERYDAY ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

On Sundays, after the Liturgy, we will be starting a new series of classes. As the title suggests, these classes will focus on a variety of topics with the goal of translating our theology into our everyday lives. Is there a topic you would like to learn about?

MANY YEARS!

Birthdays

- 1 John Savage
- 7 Heidi Hintermaier
- 13 Michelle Marble
- 15 Nikki Williams
- 16 Olga Plummer
- 18 Joshua Marble
- 19 Andrew Ennis
- 20 Bianca Lee
- 24 Benita Muth

Anniversaries

- 30 George & Larysa Moore



PARISH NEEDS

We are always looking for people to use their talents to serve in our community.

Here are a few needs we have:

- The goal of coffee hour/ hospitality hour is to give people an opportunity to fellowship as well as to show hospitality for guests. If you eat regularly at coffee hours please consider bringing food once or twice a month.
- We accept donations for the paper supplies we use during coffee hour.
- If you stay for food and fellowship on Sunday's please help clean up after coffee hour. Many hands make lite work. Thank you for all those who regularly say to clean up on Sunday's.
- There are some items outdoors that need to be brought into the parish hall storage. Talk to Fr. Theophan.
- We are putting together a list of furniture needs for our parish hall and we are accepting donations for this cause.
- This summer we would like to have another Prospora baking workshop. Please let Fr. Theophan or Sondra know if you are interested.

What about ministry ideas?

- Organizing meals for those in need.
- Visiting those who cannot make it to church.
- Helping our elder people of the parish.

Please take the time to consider what ways you can help our parish. Thank you to all those who serve already. Your sacrifice makes a big difference our small community.

55 MAXIMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE FR. THOMAS HOPKO

Below is a series of short phrases, or maxims, that I have found to be very practical and helpful. We can often times think that the spiritual life is very complicated and hard to live. Fr. Thomas was asked to come up with a simple and concise list of the essence of our Life in Christ as we struggle on the path towards salvation. He came up with these 55 maxims. I would encourage you to post them somewhere where you can see them often

1. Be always with Christ and trust God in everything.
2. Pray as you can, not as you think you must.
3. Have a keepable rule of prayer done by discipline.
4. Say the Lord's Prayer several times each day.
5. Repeat a short prayer when your mind is not occupied.
6. Make some prostrations when you pray.
7. Eat good foods in moderation and fast on fasting days.
8. Practice silence, inner and outer.
9. Sit in silence 20 to 30 minutes each day.
10. Do acts of mercy in secret.
11. Go to liturgical services regularly.
12. Go to confession and holy communion regularly.
13. Do not engage intrusive thoughts and feelings.
14. Reveal all your thoughts and feelings to a trusted person regularly.
15. Read the scriptures regularly.
16. Read good books, a little at a time.
17. Cultivate communion with the saints.
18. Be an ordinary person, one of the human race.
19. Be polite with everyone, first of all family members.
20. Maintain cleanliness and order in your home.
21. Have a healthy, wholesome hobby.
22. Exercise regularly.
23. Live a day, even a part of a day, at a time.
24. Be totally honest, first of all with yourself.
25. Be faithful in little things.
26. Do your work, then forget it.
27. Do the most difficult and painful things first.
28. Face reality.
29. Be grateful.
30. Be cheerful.
31. Be simple, hidden, quiet and small.
32. Never bring attention to yourself.
33. Listen when people talk to you.
34. Be awake and attentive, fully present where you are.
35. Think and talk about things no more than necessary.
36. Speak simply, clearly, firmly, directly.
37. Flee imagination, fantasy, analysis, figuring things out.
38. Flee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
39. Don't complain, grumble, murmur or whine.
40. Don't seek or expect pity or praise.
41. Don't compare yourself with anyone.
42. Don't judge anyone for anything.
43. Don't try to convince anyone of anything.
44. Don't defend or justify yourself.
45. Be defined and bound by God, not people.
46. Accept criticism gracefully and test it carefully.
47. Give advice only when asked or when it is your duty.
48. Do nothing for people that they can and should do for themselves.
49. Have a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim and caprice.
50. Be merciful with yourself and others.
51. Have no expectations except to be fiercely tempted to your last breath.
52. Focus exclusively on God and light, and never on darkness, temptation and sin.
53. Endure the trial of yourself and your faults serenely, under God's mercy.
54. When you fall, get up immediately and start over.
55. Get help when you need it, without fear or shame.



We now can accept donations through Realm. This can be done as a guest or through your own personal profile. Once you have claimed your profile you can sign in and donate.

When you donate through Realm, your payment information (credit card number or bank account number) remains private (between you and Realm) and is not viewed by anyone in the parish. You can make your payment recurring and easily cancel at any time. The giving link in Realm gives you the option to choose which fund you would like to donate to.

In Realm you can:

- Donate by Automatic Bank Withdrawal - This carries the lowest fee for the parish, less than 1%
- Donate by Debit or Credit Card This comes with a standard fee for the parish of 2.6%
- Donate by Text message - Text siocmacon (\$amount) to 73256 to give to Tithes & Offerings using your text messaging.
- If you have claimed your profile you can easily see a record of your charitable donations to St. Innocent Church.



Consider supporting St. Innocent through Amazon Smile.

Go to smile.amazon.com/ch/58-2418134 and Amazon donates to a percentage of what you buy to St. Innocent Orthodox Christian Church.



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

Baby Bottle Boomerang fundraiser for Monroe County Pregnancy Center. We will pass out baby bottles on Mother's day and get them back on Father's day. Also, we can accept donations through Realm.

For more information about the Pregnancy Center please visit their website @ monroecountypregnancycenter.org/



Consider supporting St. Innocent through Kroger community rewards. If you have a Kroger card, you can update your Kroger Community Rewards online. Our organization number is (49127) or you can search for Innocent and select our church.

Guidelines for Church etiquette from our Parish Guide Book

Church Etiquette

St. Innocent Orthodox Church is a parish in the Diocese of the South of the Orthodox Church of America. When people travel around to different communities there are many customs and local traditions. Some are cultural; some are pious customs. The following etiquette is for the community of St. Innocent's but could also be understood to reflect the general ethos of the OCA. The goal of having a general Church etiquette is not to strike fear in people, but rather to inform people of the common practices of our Church. In the modern Orthodox Church in America, it is not uncommon to find many sincere, devout people who were never informed about basic Church etiquette whether they were born and raised in the faith or came into the Church later in life.

Entering the Church (Late)

The time to arrive at church is before the service starts. If you arrive after the Divine Liturgy begins, try to enter the church quietly. If the Epistle or Gospel is being read or the Little or Great Entrance is taking place, wait until it is finished to quickly find your place. If Father is giving the sermon, stay in the back until he has concluded. The general rule of thumb is to try not to distract or interrupt the Liturgy when you enter. Of course, the best way to avoid this problem is to arrive on time. Those who arrive after the Gospel reading should generally refrain from partaking of the Eucharist that day as "proper preparation" for Holy Communion assumes the ascetical effort of arriving on time to the service.

Lighting Candles

Lighting candles is an important part of Orthodox worship. We light them as we pray, making an offering to accompany our prayers. Orthodox typically light candles when coming into the church - and that is usually the best time to light them, but there are times when candles

should not be lit. It is not proper to light candles during the Epistle or Gospel readings, during the Little or Great Entrances or at the sermon.

Standing and sitting

The traditional posture for prayer and worship in the Orthodox Church has been to stand. Chairs or benches on the side walls are usually reserved for the elderly, infirm or those "with child". If you need to sit this is no sin, just be aware that there are some times when you should definitely stand such as the beginning of the service "Blessed is the Kingdom", the Gospel reading, the Little and Great Entrances, the Anaphora "let us stand aright", the singing of the Creed, the "Our Father", the distribution of Holy Communion, whenever the priest gives a blessing, and the Dismissal.

Crossing those Legs?

In some Orthodox cultures, crossing one's legs is taboo and considered to be very disrespectful. In our North American culture, while there are no real taboos concerning crossing one's legs, we tend to cross our legs to get comfortable while sitting. Should we cross our legs in church? No. Not because it is "wrong" to ever cross legs, but rather because it is too casual - and too relaxed - for being in the presence of God. Just think about it, when you get settled in your favorite chair at home, you lean back, cross your legs, and then your mind can wander anywhere it wants to. In church we should remain attentive (i.e.: "Let us attend") at all times as a soldier prepared for (spiritual) battle before his commander whether we are sitting or standing.

Lipstick

Lipstick may look fine on lips, but it looks horrible on icons, crosses, the Communion spoon and the priest's or bishop's hand. Many icons are now behind glass out of fear of being ruined by lipstick. Please be considerate, blot your lips well before

Guidelines for general church etiquette...

Did you know?

When venerating an icon we kiss the hands, clothing or feet of Christ or the saints. The face is not the place for kissing, at least on icons!



venerating an icon, taking Communion, or kissing the cross or the priest's or bishop's hand.

Sunday Dress

Our dress should always, especially at church, be becoming of a Christian. Here are some basic guidelines,

-Children: Only young children (under 10) should wear shorts to church - and then only dress shorts. Athletic shorts, cut-offs, and spandex shorts are never appropriate church wear (for children or adults!). Shoes or sandals should be clean and tied. No one should wear T-shirts with any kind of writing on them ("This Bud's for You!" is definitely out).

- Women: For both men and women modesty is the key to dressing appropriately in Church. Modest dresses, skirts or slacks are appropriate. Tank tops, short skirts, skin-tight dresses, tight jeans and spandex type wear are never appropriate for Church. Head coverings are welcome but not required.

- Men: Men are also to dress modestly as befits a follower of Christ. While coat and tie are by no means mandatory, shirts with collars and clean pants/slacks are not too much to ask.

The above guidelines may be adjusted for services outside of Divine Liturgy, i.e. Vespers. It is better to be in church for prayer than to not come at all for mere lack of a change of clothes—as may be the case when coming from a Saturday outing. Finally, this is not a call for someone to buy a whole new wardrobe

just to be a part of the Church. Use your best judgment and good taste when it comes to Church.

Electronic Gadgets

With all of the electronic gadgets we have today, (cell phones, pagers, handheld games, iPads, etc.), it is important to remember that most, if not all, are not appropriate for church. So, turn off your cell phone or pager (or at least set it to vibrate) when you enter the church and leave your other electronic gadgets in the car.

Kiss (Don't Shake) the Priest's or Bishop's Hand

The proper way to greet a bishop or priest is to ask his blessing and kiss his right hand. How do you do this? Approach the bishop or priest with your right hand over your left and say "Father ("Master," in the case of a bishop), bless." When you receive such a blessing it is Christ Himself who offers the blessing through the hand of the priest or bishop.

Snacks for Children

Parents often bring little snacks for young children to keep them occupied and quiet in church. This is fine as long as it is discreet and quiet and the parent sees to cleaning up any leftovers. By the time a child is 3-4 years old this will most likely be unnecessary. And by the time a child reaches age 7 they are mostly capable of fasting the entire morning of Holy Communion. For those children who do require snacks during service, please refrain from feeding them, even a bottle, while in line for Communion, as they ought to come to the Holy Mysteries without food already in their mouths. Chewing gum is never appropriate in church.

In and Out

Certainly parents should have ready access to the doors to take small children out if they are distracting or need a short break—for this reason, the doors are to be accessible, i.e. let us avoid the temptation to congregate around the back door, and challenge ourselves to move forward into the Nave.

Guidelines for general church etiquette continued..

What do I do during the censings?

There are many local customs dealing with the censuring of the Church. In some places people move to the center of the Church and in others, they stay where they are. Here at St. Innocent's people should stay where they are while the priest is censuring. In general, while the priest or deacon is censuring people should stop venerating the icons in the center of the Church.

Talking during Church

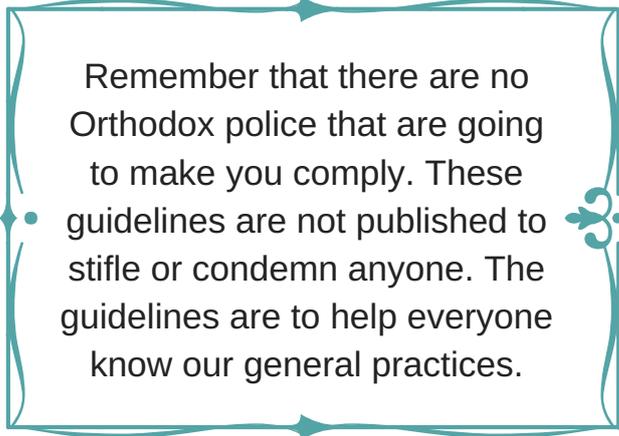
It isn't appropriate to greet people and have a conversation with them during the services. This is especially true while in line for the Holy Eucharist. It is not appropriate for anyone to have a conversation during communion, either before or after receiving the Eucharist. While it is a hospitable act to offer friends and visitors a piece of antidoron at this time, it is not the occasion for visiting or catching up with one another. While waiting to receive communion, we ought to be in a state of prayerful preparation, after receiving, in a state of prayerful gratitude, and if not receiving, repenting and praying quietly—or else singing along with the communion hymn. It is likewise inappropriate to begin to chat during the prayers of thanksgiving. Talk to God while in the church through your prayers, hymns, and thanksgiving, and to your friends in the hall afterward.

Preparing for communion

Part of the preparation for receiving the Holy Eucharist is fasting. Orthodox Christians are expected to fast at least from 12 midnight until they receive the Holy Mysteries unless medically unable. This fast includes abstaining from all food and drink. This fast applies to all the faithful including children over the age of 7. It is also expected that the married faithful will abstain from adult relations on the evening (from Vespers on) before receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Handling the Holy Bread

After taking Holy Communion and at the end of the liturgy, it is traditional to eat a piece of holy bread or antidoron - the



Remember that there are no Orthodox police that are going to make you comply. These guidelines are not published to stifle or condemn anyone. The guidelines are to help everyone know our general practices.

bread that was left over after Holy Communion was prepared. While antidoron is not Holy Communion, it is blessed bread and as such, should be eaten carefully so that crumbs don't fall all over the place. Monitor your children as they take the antidoron and teach them to eat it respectfully.

Leaving Before the Dismissal

Leaving church before the Dismissal deprives us of a blessing. The Liturgy has a beginning ("Blessed is the Kingdom...") and an end ("Let us depart in peace..."). We live in a fast-paced world where we seem to be hurrying from place to place. But in God's presence, we need to make every attempt to fight this pressure to move on to the next thing on the day's agenda. We deprive ourselves of blessings by not being still and participating in God's holiness. It is important to stay after Communion to complete our prayer and thank God for his precious gifts to us.

A Final Thought

North American society in the late 20th century is rather casual in its approach to life. Don't allow this prevailing attitude to enter into your Orthodox Christian piety. There are surely a lot of other areas that could be covered here. Much of church etiquette is based on common sense and showing respect for God and others. Always remember that you are in church to worship God, the Holy Trinity. The priest says, "With the fear of God and faith and love, draw near." Let this be the way you approach all of worship. If you do, you will probably have good church etiquette.

June 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>3 All Saints 9:40am 3 & 6th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:20pm Everyday Orthodoxy Class</p>	<p>4 The Apostles Fast Begins</p>	<p>5 9am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>6 6pm Daily Vespers 6:45 Bible Study</p>	<p>7 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry</p>	<p>8 1 No Fast</p>	<p>9 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>10 9:40am 3 & 6th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:20pm Everyday Orthodoxy Class</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 9am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>13 6pm Daily Vespers 6:45 Bible Study</p>	<p>14 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>17 Father's Day</p>	<p>18 <i>Fr. Theophan</i> <i>Vacation through</i> <i>July 3rd</i></p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 6pm Readers Vespers</p>	<p>21 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23 6pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>24 Guest Priest <i>Fr. Seraphim Ioa</i> 9:40am 3 & 6th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 6pm Readers Vespers</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29 The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul</p>	<p>30 6pm Great Vespers</p>

Tentative July 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Guest Priest Fr. Seraphim <u>Joia</u> 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	2	3	4 6pm Daily Vespers	5 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	6	7 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers
8 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:20pm Everyday Orthodoxy Class	9	10 9am Morning Prayers	11 6pm Daily Vespers 6:45 Bible Study	12 <i>Fr. Theophan @Small Parish Forum Toledo, Ohio</i> 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	13 <i>Fr. Theophan @Small Parish Forum Toledo, Ohio</i>	14 <i>Fr. Theophan returns</i> 6pm Great Vespers
15 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:20pm Everyday Orthodoxy Class	16	17 9am Morning Prayers	18 6pm Daily Vespers 6:45 Bible Study	19 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	20	21 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers
22 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	23 <i>Fr. Theophan & family @ All American Council, Saint Louis, MO - through the 28th</i>	24	25 6pm Readers Vespers	26	27	28 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers
29 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	30	31				